# MODULE 3

# Finding the Available Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question

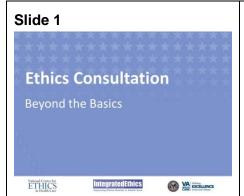
OBJECTIVES	<ul> <li>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</li> <li>□ Describe ethics knowledge and how it applies to an ethics consultation.</li> <li>□ Discuss and practice ways to gather ethics knowledge by using resources available over the Internet.</li> </ul>
RESOURCES	For the session:  Slide presentation, laptop, and projector  Computer stations (recommended ratio: 1 computer per 4 participants)  Participant Handouts  CASES pocket cards
PREPARATION	☐ Gather training resources and read through the session plan. ☐ Ensure that the laptop, computers, and projector are functioning properly.  Please note that the Web-based information contained in this module is intended to illustrate how an ethics consultant may gather ethics knowledge from the Web and was accurate when the module was developed. However, the Web is constantly evolving; therefore, some information in this module may become outdated or may be superseded.
OUTLINE	SECTIONS  1 Introduction 2 2 Using the Internet to Hunt for Relevant Ethics Knowledge 3 Internet Scavenger Hunt 4 Takeaways  Total session time  DURATION (MINUTES)  2 2 5  MINUTES  80 minutes



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** 

Veterans Health Administration National Center for Ethics in Health Care

## 1. Introduction (2 minutes)



**NOTE:** Have this slide up before the session begins.

**CLICK** when you are ready to begin.

#### Slide 2

#### Module 3

Finding the Available Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question

#### SAY:

In this session, you will learn how to find the available ethics knowledge relevant to an ethics question—in particular, how to access and use the Internet—and specific suggestions for quickly identifying the most relevant ethics knowledge.

Please note that the Web-based information contained in this module is intended to illustrate how an ethics consultant may gather ethics knowledge from the Web, and was accurate when the module was developed. However, the Web is constantly evolving; therefore, some information in this module may become outdated or may be superseded.

#### CLICK.

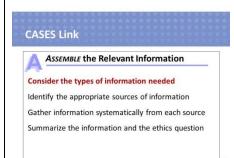
#### Slide 3

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe ethics knowledge and how it applies to an ethics consultation.
- Discuss and practice tools and techniques to gather ethics knowledge by using resources available over the Internet.

#### SAY:

The goal is to help make you aware of some readily available Web-based resources for ethics knowledge. First, you'll learn about various sources of ethics knowledge on the Web. Then we're going to share some specific suggestions for searching the Web effectively and efficiently to quickly identify the most relevant ethics knowledge. Finally, you'll practice finding the ethics knowledge relevant to a particular ethics question through a "scavenger hunt" activity.



#### SAY:

Please take out the CASES pocket card. It outlines the major steps and substeps of CASES, which is the IntegratedEthics model for performing ethics consultation.

This module falls under Step 2 of the CASES approach, "ASSEMBLE the Relevant Information," and specifically within the first substep, "Consider the types of information needed."

As you see on the card, it's essential to have 4 pieces of information to perform a high-quality ethics consultation: (1) the medical facts, (2) the patient's preferences and interests, (3) others' preferences and interests, and (4) ethics knowledge.

This module focuses on assembling ethics knowledge. Sources of this knowledge are listed on the pocket card.

# 2. Using the Internet to Hunt for Relevant Ethics Knowledge (23 minutes)

#### Slide 5

#### What Is Ethics Knowledge?

The "best thinking" relevant to the ethics question, which can be gleaned from scholarly publications, professional codes of ethics, law and policy, precedent cases, expert opinion, etc.

NOTE: This slide is animated.

#### ASK:

Let's begin with a quick exercise in free association. In 1 word, what does the term "ethics knowledge" bring to mind?" Just 1 word—who will get us going?

**ELICIT ANSWER(S):** Answers are likely to include both conceptual words, e.g., "thinking," "scholarship," and feeling words, e.g., "confusing," "abstract."

**NOTE**: Encourage responses for 30–60 seconds, which is enough time to get participants thinking. Then move on.

#### SAY:

You could probably come up with many more words if you went on free-associating. If you don't have much experience with "ethics knowledge," it can seem hard to pin down. Here's how ethics knowledge is defined in the IntegratedEthics model.



CLICK to fly in description of ethics knowledge.

**READ** the definition on the slide.

#### SAY:

In other words, ethics knowledge is nothing more than expert knowledge of the subject matter relevant to ethics consultation.

#### With Every Ethics Consultation. . .

- · Reflect on what you know already.
- Consider whether your knowledge covers all aspects of the ethics question.
- Consider whether there may be sources you haven't yet investigated.
- Consider whether there may be new thinking on the issue.

#### SAY:

Ethics knowledge is absolutely essential to an appropriate ethical analysis; you can't perform a high quality ethics consultation without it.

For each ethics consultation, you should reflect on the ethics knowledge you already have and determine whether it is sufficient to respond authoritatively to the ethics question.

Even for experienced ethics consultants, it is often appropriate to look things up so that you can quote specific source materials to support your analysis.

As an ethics consultant, *you* are the ethics expert and need to bring ethics knowledge to the table.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 7

#### What Is the Search Goal?

#### To find

- · General overview of what's "out there"
- · Comprehensive literature review?
- · A few key resources?
- · Background on a broad ethics topic?
- · Legal standards?
- · Your own organization's policies and regulations
- · Professional standards?

#### SAY:

Of course, before you go hunting for ethics knowledge, you should have a good idea of what you are hunting *for*.

Depending on the nature and circumstances of a particular consult, the search goals will vary—and different goals call for different search strategies.

This slide shows some potential search goals.

Sometimes it's helpful just to get a general overview of "what's out there" in terms of ethics knowledge related to a consult.

Sometimes you may want to conduct a thorough review of the published literature if, for example, you're going to share your consult write-up with leadership or even publish it as a case study. But more often what you're looking for is just a few key resource articles relevant to the consult.

Sometimes you may want to do some background reading on a broad ethics topic.

It is always important to identify legal and policy standards. Legal standards may include state and federal laws or regulations.

It is especially important to review your own organization's regulations and policies. For VA employees, national standards can be found on the VA Web site established by the National Center for Ethics in Health Care. We will look at that Web site shortly.

You may also need to identify professional standards, such as those for physicians, nurses, psychologists, or

chaplains, as relevant.

#### ASK:

Can you think of other search goals?

#### ELICIT ANSWER(S): Answers may include:

- Policy standards for your own organization.
  Residents and staff who work with multiple
  organizations may be required to follow different
  policies in those settings, which might sometimes
  create confusion and conflict.
- What other organizations are doing—especially if your organization has no clear policy on a particular issue
- Empirical data to inform the analysis
- Subject matter experts

**NOTE:** If participants don't come up with all the answers above, quickly mention the ones they missed.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 8

**Ethics Knowledge Internet Search** 



#### SAY:

In this module, we focus on ethics knowledge you can find on the Internet.

You may worry that there is a great deal of knowledge out there but you don't have a great deal of time to find it

Don't worry. Using tips offered in this module, you can become Internet superheroes. To demonstrate, let's take a flying look at some key resources. We will just visit them long enough for you to see what they look like and to briefly explain what makes them different from each other.

Handout 3.1: Suggested Internet Resources for Finding Ethics Knowledge includes all the information we cover, so you needn't take notes. For now, please put your handouts aside and imagine that you are actually sitting at a computer doing a search as we click through the screenshots on the slides.

#### **Internet Sources**

- Search Engines (e.g., Google™, Google™ Scholar, Yahoo!® Ask.com™)
- · National Center for Ethics in Health Care
- PubMed
- ETHXWeb
- EthicShare
- AMA PolicyFinder<sup>®</sup>

#### SAY:

Here are the 7 resources we're going to visit.

**READ** the list of resources on the slide.

CLICK.

#### Slide 10



#### SAY:

We'll start with search engines. In addition to helping you find scholarly and professional ethics knowledge, they can help you find out what other organizations are doing about ethics questions similar to the ones you are addressing.

For this presentation, we will use  $Google^{TM}$  to practice finding ethics resources.

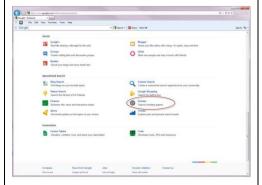
CLICK.

#### Slide 11



#### SAY:

Each search engine has different methods to help the user zero in on specific topics and areas of interest. This version of Google has a Web menu across the top of the screen. If we click on "More" in that menu, we get a dropdown menu. Then we need to scroll down to the bottom of that sub-menu and select "Even more."



#### SAY:

On the next page, find the item called "Scholar." This site links to scholarly publications that are available online for free.

Google and other search engines for the general public complement the scholarly and professional sites we will visit shortly. If you use all these sites, there will be a lot of overlap in your findings, but often, each site will provide 1 or 2 references that you didn't find on the others.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 13



#### SAY:

Here we are on the Web site of the National Center for Ethics in Health Care.

**NOTE:** For non-VA audiences:

#### SAY:

For those of you who are not familiar with the National Center, it is part of the VA health care system, which is the largest health care system in the United States.

#### SAY:

From the National Center's Web site, you can access a variety of resources, including Center publications, other resources organized by health care ethics domains and topics, VA health care ethics policies, and—as you are about to see—many important non-VA ethics resources.

Notice the navigation bar on the left. If we click on Additional Health Care Ethics Resources ...

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 14



#### SAY:

... we land on a page with links that send you directly to several important ethics resources.

If you click on the link to the AMA Policy Finder or other links off the site ....

#### **FACULTY GUIDE**

# Say: ...you will get a notice that says you are leaving the National Center and VA's Web site. Click "OK."



#### SAY:

You can also access Web sites by typing or entering the URL into the address bar.

The U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM), which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), maintains the world's largest biomedical library and includes a section on Bioethics Information Resources, pictured here. The link to this Web site is provided on **Handout** 3.1.

From this page you can search on two databases: PubMed and the NLM Catalog.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 17



#### NOTE: This slide is animated.

#### SAY:

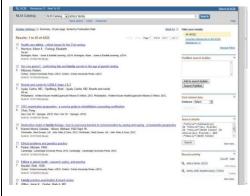
The first database, PubMed, is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and is the gold standard for searching the medical literature. It is, in particular, a good place to start looking for empirical data relating to bioethics.

The limitation of PubMed is that for the most part it includes only peer-reviewed articles from medical journals. You won't obtain resources like book chapters or articles from non-peer-reviewed ethics journals or social science journals. Also, only some of the resources listed on PubMed offer abstracts online, and many of the full text articles are not available for free.

If you start your search from this page (as opposed to PubMed's own home page), a filter for "ethics" will already be applied to your search term. To give you a taste of how this database works, we have entered the word "Family" in the field.



CLICK to fly in the results of the "Family" search.



**NOTE:** This slide is animated.

#### SAY:

The second database on the NLM home page is their own catalog. It provides access to bibliographic data for over 1.4 million journals, books, audiovisuals, computer software, electronic resources, and other materials. The advantage of the NLM database is that it provides comprehensive search results (including books) for your topic. The disadvantage is that you cannot obtain full text articles from this source.

Unlike the PubMed search, however, the NLM link from this page does not filter for "ethics." So, to obtain the most relevant content, you will need to add "ethics" to your search terms. For this example, we have entered "ethics family" to show you how this database works.

**CLICK** to fly in the results of the "Ethics Family" search.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 19



#### SAY:

Another important source of ethics knowledge that is available from the National Center's Web page is ETHXWeb.

ETHXWeb is a searchable database offered by the Bioethics Research Library at Georgetown University. Unlike PubMed, ETHXWeb includes knowledge of bioethics and professional ethics from a broad range of sources, not just medical literature. For example, you'll find journal and news articles, books and book chapters, reports, and audiovisuals at ETHXWeb. You'll also find bills, laws, court decisions, legal standards, and other legal documents.



#### SAY:

Another link from the National Center for Ethics Web site takes you to EthicShare, a searchable database of articles, book chapters, U.S. Government publications including Presidential Commission reports, dissertation records, e-books, and other scholarly resources relating to the field of bioethics. It is based at the University of Minnesota.

EthicShare automatically adds new research materials regularly, and users are invited to use the site to share citations, conference announcements, and calls for papers.

**POINT** to the white bar at the top of the screen and **SAY**:

This is where you enter search terms.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 21



#### SAY:

Another important outside source you'll find linked to the National Center Web site is the American Medical Association's (AMA) PolicyFinder. PolicyFinder is the authoritative source for codes and policies published by the AMA, including Virtual Mentor and reports from the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs, or CEJA. Once you locate the PolicyFinder, you must accept the AMA terms and conditions before you are allowed to search its database.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 22



#### SAY:

You are then directed to a page where you can choose to use the AMA PolicyFinder online or download a standalone version on your computer. Today, we'll select the online version.



#### SAY:

So here's the PolicyFinder page. Note that you can limit your search to "Health and Ethics Policies." Under this subset you will find all the official codes and ethics opinions issued by the AMA, as well as reports from CEJA.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 24



#### SAY:

Before we move on, I would like to point out one other good resource: Fast Facts and Concepts issued by the Medical College of Wisconsin's End of Life/Palliative Education Resource Center, or EPERC.

Fast Facts are short articles written by subject matter experts on topics related to end-of-life and palliative care.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 25

#### **How to Conduct a Search**

- 1. Begin with the ethics question.
- 2. Choose terms.
  - Pick out several search terms that are specific to the consult topic.
  - · Think of synonyms for these terms.
  - · Try out different combinations of terms.
  - · Consider adding "ethics."

#### SAY:

We're now going to look at the elements of a search strategy and then see how the elements of that strategy apply to a specific ethics question. Please turn to **Handout 3.2: How to Conduct a Search**.

We begin, as always, with the ethics question. By the time you reach this point in the CASES process, you will have formulated an ethics question, which describes the ethical concern related to a particular circumstance. Formulating the ethics question is covered in depth in Module 2.

Usually you can pick out several search terms embedded in the ethics question. Then think of synonyms for these terms and try out different combinations of terms.

Consider using the word "ethics" to narrow the search. Typing "ethics" as your first search term will immediately limit your search to items that are related to ethics.

#### **How to Conduct a Search**

- 1. Begin with the ethics question.
- 2. Choose terms.
- 3. Review list for relevant items.
  - Quickly review the first 1–2 pages.
  - · Read titles and skim excerpts.
  - · Notice the source of each item.
  - If the results are not promising, try again with different search terms.

#### SAY:

Once you have entered your search terms, you'll usually get a long list of results. You need to review the list for relevant items.

Start with a quick visual scan of the first couple of pages of the list. Note the title, excerpt, and source of each item. If you find only a small number of promising results on these first few pages, you may want to start over with different search terms.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 27

#### **How to Conduct a Search**

- 1. Begin with the ethics question.
- 2. Choose terms.
- 3. Review list for relevant items.
- 4. Drill down on items with promise.
  - Click on the most promising items.
  - · Determine if they are worth pursuing.
  - · If not, move on.
  - · Follow only promising leads/links.

#### SAY:

Once you have identified a couple of promising results, go ahead and drill down into a few of them.

If the full item doesn't seem worth pursuing, just move on.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide28

#### **How to Conduct a Search**

- 1. Begin with the ethics question.
- 2. Choose terms.
- 3. Review list for relevant items.
- 4. Drill down on items with promise.
- 5. Obtain and review relevant abstracts.
  - Try to find full-text articles.
  - Print out or download relevant articles.
  - Review references to look for other leads.

#### SAY:

Once you've found a handful of results that seem truly relevant and helpful, you should obtain them.

If you've found a reference to an article, locate the full text article if you can; it will have references that may in turn be relevant. Print out or download the article.

To sum up, this is an iterative process. You need to continually assess your current set of items and modify your search to get steadily closer to your desired results.

#### Sample Search



#### SAY:

Let's work through a sample search together. Note that this is an illustration of the materials you might find and the screens you might see when conducting online research. Keep in mind that the Internet changes constantly, and your results for any given search might vary depending on when you conduct the search, even if you use the same search terms.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 30

#### **Case Summary**

A dying patient's family requests that the patient's implanted cardioverter-defibrillator be turned off. The cardiologist refuses, commenting that this would be harmful to his patient—especially since the defibrillator had fired in response to ventricular arrhythmias 2 times over the past 3 months.

#### SAY:

Here's our sample case.

**READ** the case summary on the slide.

CLICK.

#### Slide 31

#### **The Ethics Question**

Given that the family argues that the defibrillator ought to be turned off out of respect for the patient, but the cardiologist maintains that he should not turn off the defibrillator because he would feel directly responsible for the patient's death, is it ethically justifiable for the cardiologist to refuse to turn off the defibrillator?

#### SAY:

And here's the ethics question:

**READ** the ethics question on the slide.

#### SAY:

Your first step is key to success: try to pick out search terms that are specific to the consult topic.

#### ASK:

So what terms do you think would work best here?

#### **ELICIT ANSWER(S):** Answers may include:

- Family [too general]
- Defibrillator [maybe?]
- Turn off [maybe?]
- Respect for patient [too general]
- Cardiologist [too general]
- Responsible for patient's death [too specific]

#### SAY:

If you find that the terms you have chosen do not yield results that reflect the values central to the ethical concern, expand your search terms to include additional values or contextual details.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 33

#### **Pick Out Several Search Terms**

Given that the family argues that the defibrillator ought to be turned off out of respect for the patient, but the cardiologist maintains that he should not turn off the defibrillator because he would feel directly responsible for the patient's death, is it ethically justifiable for the cardiologist to refuse to turn off the defibrillator?

#### SAY:

The terms you have suggested are good choices. For purposes of our mock search, we'll use "turn off" and "defibrillator" for this specific consult topic. However, If you do a real search on this topic, you may want to try synonyms to expand your search results.

Note that search engines such as Google automatically check synonyms unless you put a word in quotation marks, e.g., "deactivate" would not find pages that contain the term "turn off." However, sometimes you find that by playing around with different search terms you get different results.

#### ASK:

What are some synonyms for "turn off"?

**ELICIT ANSWER(S):** Answers may include deactivate, shut off, shut down.

#### ASK:

How about "defibrillator"?

**ELICIT ANSWER(S):** Answers may include implantable or implanted defibrillator, AICD.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 33



#### SAY:

It's generally best to just dive in and try different combinations of terms with several search engines. Let's start with Google and use the term "turn off defibrillator."



#### SAY:

Here's what we get. The first item looks promising; it's a journal article that seems on topic. That's an authoritative source.

The next 4 resources aren't promising. It looks as though "CHFpatients.com" is a commercial site. Likewise, you may not be sure about "the heart.org" site. The next item, from Australia, seems to be about *accidentally* turning off a defibrillator—that's not on topic. The following one seems technically oriented.

One problem with this search is that a lot of the items don't seem to be related to ethics. So let's add the word "ethics" to the search and see what we get. To avoid this problem, this is why we suggest you start off with "ethics" as one of your search terms.

#### CLICK.



#### SAY:

That's a little bit better. The first couple of items are basically the same, but now we have a couple more items that might be useful. We have one from the Mayo Clinic journal, one from an AMA journal, and one from the Annals—all good sources.

These results also might give you some ideas for additional search terms to try. The new articles use the word "deactivate" or the word "withdraw," so you might try the search again using 1 of these terms and see what you come up with.

# 3. Internet Scavenger Hunt (50 minutes)

#### Slide 36

### Group Activity Instructions

- 1. Assign team responsibilities.
- 2. Read Case Summary.
- 3. Discuss and decide on search terms and strategy.
- 4. Access at least 3 resources on the Internet.
- Prepare to explain your choice of strategy and how well you thought it worked.

**NOTE:** Display this slide throughout the activity.

#### SAY:

Now you're going to have the opportunity to try this in a Scavenger Hunt activity! For this activity, we will be using Handouts 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3: Find the Available Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question.

ACTIVITY: Internet Scavenger Hunt (Refer to Handouts 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) Assemble groups of 3 to 4, each seated around a computer station. **Groups Time** 25 minutes for group work 25 minutes to report out Total: 50 minutes Before the SAY: In this activity, you will use the Internet to find relevant ethics knowledge about the case summarized on **Handout 3.3**. You should start by reviewing **Activity:** Handouts 3.1 and 3.2. Give the following You will have 25 minutes to conduct your search, and each team should plan to instructions access at least 3 resources in that time. It is up to each team to choose which Web sites to access and how to conduct the search. Also, note that some of the references you locate may not be available in full text on the Internet but may be available either through your organization's library Web page, or in hardcopy. As you go along, keep track of your findings on **Handout 3.3**. After the 25-minute search is up, each team will present its findings to the entire group. Be prepared to explain why you chose a particular search method or database(s). We also want to hear how well you thought your strategy worked. Your first task as a team will be to divide the workload to be successful in your hunt. There are 3 main responsibilities in this activity: "Driving" the computer Facilitating team discussion on the strategies and search terms to use Taking notes and reporting out to the larger group at the end Once you have assigned roles, you should stick with them throughout the activity.

ACTIVITY: Internet Scavenger Hunt (Refer to Handouts 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3)			
	Please bear in mind that your focus for this activity is on locating and assembling the ethics knowledge, and not on how to present or analyze it.		
During the Activity: Monitor	Offer assistance and answer questions as needed.		
Following the Activity: Debrief	Reconvene the whole group.  CLICK to the next slide.		

#### Discussion

- · Which strategies did you use?
- · Which ones were most productive?
- · What did you find?
- Compare your results to the resource list.
- · Any useful lessons learned?
- · What would you do differently next time?

#### SAY:

Each team will present their results. It should be apparent to you that searching for ethics knowledge is not always easy. You'll need time to master these databases and get fast at searching them. You will probably have some of the same results to report, but try not to just repeat what others have said—build on it!

May I have 1 group volunteer to report out first?

**READ** the questions on the slide and allow time for reporting out.

#### SAY:

Thank you, everyone, for sharing the ethics knowledge you found. Now please take a quick look at the following handouts. They represent a thorough search done on this topic.

Handout 3.4: Sample Findings: Ethics Knowledge Relevant to an Ethics Question

Handout 3.5: Reference List of Ethics Knowledge: Practicing Medical Procedures on the Newly Dead

Handout 3.6: Summary of Ethics Knowledge: Practicing Medical Procedures on the Newly Dead

# 4. Takeaways (5 minutes)

#### Slide 38

#### **Takeaways**

Finding the available ethics knowledge relevant to an

- · Ethics knowledge: the "best thinking" relevant to the ethics question
- · Key sources of ethics knowledge on the Web
- · Strategies for searching the Web
- · Practice finding the ethics knowledge relevant to particular ethics questions

#### NOTE: This slide is animated.

#### SAY:

Let's spend a couple of minutes here at the end of Module 3 to reflect on what you will take away from this session.

#### ASK:

What struck you as most important for your work as an ethics consultant?

**ELICIT ANSWER(S):** Answers may include any responses participants make. Take 2 or 3 responses, and as many more as time allows. Acknowledge each response.

#### SAY:

We have touched upon many concepts in this module. Hopefully, you have the materials you need to bring them all back to mind when you return to the job. Here they are, summarized.



**CLICK** to fly in the summarized concepts.

#### CLICK.

#### Slide 39



Questions?

ETHICS





**NOTE:** Answer any questions and conclude the session with appreciation for the work participants have done and anything you want to say about your experience of the time you have spent with them.